



New York Farm Bureau

Jeff Williams, Director



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 1527 (Senator Krueger)/Assembly Bill 1617 (Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes)

AN ACT IN RELATION TO MARIHUANA REGULATION AND TAXATION

Date: 6/10/2019

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm advocacy organization, requests your support for this legislation. If enacted, this bill would establish a new agency for the regulation of cannabis in New York State. This bill would give priority consideration to farmers when issuing licenses for cannabis related activities and help growers afford entry into the market. This bill would also establish a state cannabis advisory board, which would advise the legislature on the cultivation, processing, distribution, transportation as well as equity in the cannabis industry and public health concerns.

New York's agricultural sector has been a longstanding driver of our state's economy, with over 35,000 farms that contribute nearly billions to the state's GDP. However, many small farmers are struggling. The latest census data reports 2,100 fewer farms statewide than there were in 2012 – a 6% drop – accompanied by a 9% increase in labor costs and a lower average net income for New York farmers compared to our peers around the country.

Given the current status of the farm economy in New York State, farmers recognize the potential opportunity the cultivation of cannabis could be for New York State's agriculture industry. For a successful implementation of a cannabis program in New York State, if legalized, farmers must to have an active role in the growth and production, as well as development and implementation of the recreational cannabis program in the state. Farmers encourage the establishment of an advisory board which the bill creates, however, New York Farm Bureau recommends a set number of seats to be reserved for farmers to provide local grower input into the program.

Farmers understand what it takes to produce a crop and the challenges that can come along with it. Including New York agriculture both as cultivators and as advisors for cannabis would help make this program a success for the state, if legalized. Farmers operate in a global economy and this bill would help provide new opportunities for New York farmers.

Given these reasons, New York Farm Bureau respectfully requests your support of this legislation.